THE MAYORS INSTITUTE ON

CITY DESIGN

Design Program, National Endowment for the Arts Winter 1995

Reviving Savannah's Broughton Street

The SDRA's facade loan fund provided seed money for this renovation project on Broughton Street. The previously vacant upper floors have been converted to apartments.

Modest investment and a commitment to innovation and broad community participation have paid great dividends to the City of Savannah. In January 1992, the city was at a crossroad—after years of trying to revive Broughton Street, downtown's traditional retail corridor, an ambitious redevelopment scheme was presented to city leaders. An out-of-town developer proposed what looked to some like a good deal. If over a ten year period, the city committed $25 million to support the project, the developer would spearhead an effort to attract $53 million in private investment.

Broughton, once the city's main retail street, had been in decline for years. Despite success in promoting historic preservation and riverfront redevelopment, the city had a tough time attracting investment to the once-vibrant commercial district. Ground floor vacancy rates approached 40 percent, most upper floors were empty, and many buildings were in poor physical condition. A host of revitalization strategies and investment plans were tested over the years, but Broughton Street's decline continued.

After a period of intense debate city council members approved the plan, but newly-elected Mayor Susan Weiner (MICD 12 1992) remained reluctant to lend her support. From her perspective, the project's cost greatly outweighed the benefits, so she vetoed the council's action. After an unsuccessful attempt to override the veto, city leaders were forced to reevaluate their plans.

Soon after the vote, Mayor Weiner was invited to participate in a meeting of the Mayors' Institute. When asked to present an issue, the mayor immediately selected Broughton Street. Her presentation generated lively discussion at the Institute and she returned to Savannah with a full plate of ideas and recommendations. Institute resource team members,

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Design Leadership in Eureka, California

Mayor Nancy Fleming (MICD West 1990) joined fellow mayors at the western Institute in Berkeley to share some of her city's successes. A summary of her remarks follows.

This story is about the reality of getting things done once you have the vision and inspiration to proceed.

I was a newly elected mayor when I attended the Mayors' Institute West in 1990. The education and networking at the Institute helped me define a clearer vision of what I wanted to accomplish in my four year term. I returned home better able to express my concerns about the city and the direction we were headed, and motivated to convey my passion to the city's *seen-it-all-and-heard-it-all-before* staff and enlist the support of the council and city manager. After working with Donlyn Lyndon, coordinator of MICD West, and the Institute's resource team I was much better equipped to guide the city towards a better, brighter future.

In the past four years, we have been working to reinforce our identity as a historic *and* contemporary seaport. We have focused resources on the productive and beautiful Humbolt Bay, our fishing industry, and our heritage as a center for recreational boating and commercial shipping. Preservation and the arts are also at the center of our agenda. I learned at the Institute that to strengthen our future we must honor our past, and that if we do so effectively, citizens will feel more proud and excited about the city's rich culture and history. Eureka is in the midst of a dramatic transition—from a resource-based economy to a more diverse

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including former San Francisco planning director Allan Jacobs; landscape architect Laurie Olin, developer Richard Baron and urban designer Mark Schimmenti offered strategies for working with consultants and staff, tips on attracting housing and involving the community, and ideas on appropriate public/private investment strategies.

According to the mayor, an important lesson was learned about community problem-solving: "If *you* build it, they will not necessarily come, but if *they* design it and build it, they will come." In other words, plan *with* not *for* the community, and engage the essential stakeholders. After the mayor shared her experience at the Institute with the council, they began to shape a new vision for downtown revitalization.

To kickoff the planning process, the city organized and hosted a participatory urban design forum. In July 1992, Mayor Weiner brought in a team of design professionals to tour the city and lead a series of workshops with citizens, community leaders, merchants, and preservationists. With planning assistance from the Institute and strong media coverage, the workshop was a great success. Over 400 residents and business leaders turned out to discuss downtown's future and the potential role of urban design and preservation in the city's economic development efforts. (A summary of the forum is included in the Fall 1992 issue of *CITY DESIGN.*)

Buoyed by the results of the forum, the city formed the Savannah Development and Renewal Authority (SDRA), a public agency created by an act of the state legislature. The SDRA's has a twofold mission: 1) to conduct and carry out master planning activities, and 2) to improve downtown's economy, especially on Broughton Street. The Authority functions as an autonomous body governed by a city-appointed board of directors. It's not just a blue ribbon panel of downtown business owners—the board represents diverse interests and perspectives.

In May of 1992, a year after the mayor's attendance at the Institute, the SDRA began full time operation. Its first goal: to stimulate investment on Broughton Street. With staff support from the city and a first year budget of less than $125,000, the SDRA initiated several projects. The authority formed relationships with all property and business owners on the street, developed a centralized inventory of property, established a low interest loan program to stimulate historically-appropriate facade renovations, identified development opportunities for retail and service businesses, improved cleanliness levels, and stressed the importance of high quality design *and* management.

Savannah Mayor Susan Weiner consults with landscape architect Laurie Olin and Abilene, Texas mayor Gary McCaleb at the Institute in Charlottesville, Virginia.

In the SDRA's first eighteen months of operation, results have been impressive. Broughton Street has experienced a net gain of 15 new businesses,bringing 176 net new jobs to the street. The SDRA has facilitated 22 building renovations, accounting for over $1.8 million in private investment, and ten property acquisitions that brought another $1.5 million of new investment. The authority also has assisted property owners develop apartments in previously vacant, upper story space. The city's total investment for the first 18 months was $305,000 in operating costs and $100,000 for a facade improvement loan program. Thus, every dollar of city investment has attracted $8.14 of private investment.

The SDRA is using a mix of development and management strategies to guide downtown revitalization, stressing an incremental

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National Design for Transportation Awards

The U.S. Department of Transportation and the National Endowment for the Arts are pleased to announce the 1995 Design for Transportation National Awards Program. The awards will honor those projects and activities that exemplify the highest standards of design and have made an outstanding contribution to the nation's transportation network and the people it serves.

Entries of design products and activities will be accepted in the following general categories: Architecture; Engineerin;, Energy Conservation, Technology and Systems; Art and Graphic Design; Historic Preservation; Urban Design, Planning, and Landscape Architecture; and Special Interest. Entries must achieve one or more of the following U.S. Department of Transportation goals: Tie America Together; Enhance Our Environment; Put People First; and Promote Safety and Security.

Anyone may enter a transportation or transportation related project that was completed and in use in the United States and its possessions between January 1, 1988, and January 1, 1995. Funding for the projects may be from any source, not just the federal government. The deadline for entries is June 12, 1995.

For entry forms or further information, please contact Thomas Grooms, Program Director, Federal Design Improvement, Design Program, National Endowment for the Arts at (202) 682-5437. ★

MICD: XVII
October 1994

San Antonio

RESOURCE TEAM

Annette Bridges
historic preservation

John Clark
real estate development

John Costonis
land use law

Eduardo Diaz
arts administration

Mayor Daniel Kemmis
Missoula, MT

Walter Kulash
transportation planning

Mary Means
planning/participation

Laurie Olin
landscape architecture

Samina Quraeshi
graphic design

Mayor Joseph Riley, Jr.
Charleston, SC (keynote)

Ignacio San Martin
landscape/urban design

Mark Schimmenti
architecture/urban design

MAYORS AND DESIGN ISSUES

Mayor Joan Darrah, Stockton, CA: Stockton Channel, former home of the city's boat-building industry, represents a rare opportunity for the city. How should the city proceed? What design, development, and participation strategies are appropriate?

Mayor David Fischer, St. Petersburg, FL: The city plans to develop a transitional facility for alcohol dependent individuals. Three sites are under consideration, each with its own constraints and opportunities. Which site is best and how can the project fit comfortably in its context?

Mayor Bill Johnson, Rochester, NY: A grocery store that occupies a strategic site in an inner city neighborhood has been vacant since 1987. Can the store's reopening serve as a catalyst for private investment?

Mayor Pam Miller, Lexington, KY: Martin Luther King Boulevard, between downtown and the University of Kentucky, is lined with parking and vacant lots. What actions can the city take to activate the street and encourage pedestrian-scaled, mixed use development?

Mayor Mike Peters, Hartford, CT: The city plans to transform Lewis Street into an active, pedestrian-scaled retail destination. How should the public street be treated and how can the city promote appropriately-scaled private development on the few remaining vacant sites?

Mayor Susan Savage, Tulsa, OK: Mooser Creek runs through an area expected to experience rapid development. How can the city use its floodplain management and trail-planning mandates to design a corridor serving mutlipurposes?

Mayor Sharifa Wilson, East Palo Alto, CA: Whiskey Gulch, the city's traditional retail area, is in rough shape—liquor stores are the predominant use and buildings are in need of repair. Is a "Main Street" approach appropriate, or should the city consider other options?

MICD: Midwest
October 1994

Washington University

St. Louis

RESOURCE TEAM

Iain Fraser
architecture/urban design

John Hoal
architecture/urban design

Alex Krieger (keynote)
architecture/urban design

Mayor Janet Majerus
University City, MO

Jill McGuire
arts administration

Iris Miller
landscape architecture

Joe Passoneau
transportation planning

Genevieve Ray
planning/development

Christine Saum
architecture/urban design

Brenda Scheer
urban design/planning

Richard Ward
economic development

Cynthia Weese
architecture

MAYORS AND DESIGN ISSUES

Mayor Robert Bennett, Livonia, MI: A 15 acre sliver of land is separated from the rest of the city by an interstate highway. Should the city allow the development of "big-box retail" in this area while demanding a higher standard of quality for other new projects?

Mayor Joel Campbell, Dublin, OH: The city plans to annex an extensive, undeveloped area west of town. Can the city use neotraditional design strategies to promote the development of discreet neighborhood centers in the annexed area. How can a proposed regional shopping center be incorporated into the plan?

Mayor Wallace Davis, East Cleveland, OH: The Windermere Transit Station is currently the terminus of the main line into downtown Cleveland. How can the city ensure that improvements proposed by the transit authority enhance the city's redevelopment efforts along Euclid Avenue and in the adjacent residential neighborhoods?

Mayor Lorraine Morton, Evanston, IL: The Howard Street commercial corridor forms the border between Evanston and Chicago. What design strategies can Evanston use to stabilize commercial and residential development fronting on this important street?

Mayor Carol Opel, Waukesha, WI: A well-located parcel in downtown Waukesha, adjacent to the Fox River, is slated for redevelopment as a suburban style shopping center. What influence can the city bring to bear to ensure the project complements downtown and does not compromise public access to the river?

Mayor John Roof, Waterloo, IA: The Cedar River has the potential to become the heart of the Silos and Smokestacks Regional Heritage Area. What design principles can be followed in the development of the waterfront to reinforce Waterloo's heritage tourism efforts?

MICD: West
November 1994

University of California

Berkeley

RESOURCE TEAM

Karen Alschuler
architecture/planning

Dena Belzer
economics/planning

John Bullard (keynote)
planning/sustainability

Russ Ellis
sociology

Bob Harris
architecture/urban design

Randy Hester
landscape architecture

Allan Jacobs
architecture/planning

Donlyn Lyndon
architecture/urban design

Shelley Poticha
city planning

Christine Saum
architecture/urban design

Peter Bosselman
architecture/env. simulation

Mike Dobbins
architecture/planning

MAYORS AND DESIGN ISSUES

Mayor Pat Berndt, Yakima, WA: Plans exist for a large shopping center which turns its back on the main entrance to downtown. Can the city persuade the developer to reorient the project to address the gateway and make a more effective connection to adjacent areas?

Mayor Robert Burns, Midland, TX: Office towers, developed during the oil boom of the late 70's and early 80's, displaced most of Midland's downtown retail, and office vacancy rates are particularly high. How can the city spark life in the single-use downtown?

Mayor Brent Coles, Boise, ID: Development pressure around Town Square Mall is increasing. What design and development strategies can the city employ to give more identity and cohesion to this emerging suburban commercial destination?

Mayor Rosemary Corbin, Richmond, CA: The city-owned Ford Motor Co. Assembly Plant (500,000 gsf) occupies prime land on the southern waterfront. How can the reuse of this historic resource be used as a catalyst for appropriate development along the water?

Mayor Leslie Durgin, Boulder, CO: The area east of downtown, north of the university (the 30th Street Study Area) is ripe for development. Can the right design character and mix of uses be encouraged to satisfy the city's larger environmental, affordable housing, and limited development goals?

Mayor Bill Morrisette, Springfield, OR: Outside the city's traditional core, Main Street becomes a conventional suburban commercial strip with expanses of front-yard parking, continuous curb cuts, and spare landscaping. Is their a way to integrate residential uses along the street and encourage quality development and redevelopment?

U.S. Conference of Mayors
January 1995

Washington

Alumni Breakfast—Using Preservation to Build Communities That Work, A Presentation by Richard Moe, President of the National Trust for Historic Preservation.
By outlining the costs of suburban development and the benefits of rehabilitating cities, Richard Moe, President of the National Trust for Historic Preservation, encouraged mayors to fight sprawl. He cited Mayor Riley's leadership as a demonstration of how mayors can help their communities "...recognize the power and responsibility they possess to make informed choices about getting the kind of community they *want* instead of merely accepting the kind of community they *get*."

"Gentlemen," said Moe, quoting a British statesman in World War II, "we are out of money. Therefore, we shall have to think." He argued that trends toward fiscal responsibility and local control should lead to increased emphasis on preservation and respect for local tradition. "Every community has a huge investment...in downtown streets, sidewalks, water and sewer lines, parking lots, streetlights, etc. When older downtowns and inner-city neighborhoods are allowed to deteriorate, or are utilized at only 50% of capacity, taxpayer dollars are being wasted." In addition, Moe continued, preservation is one of the highest job-generating economic development options available, generating more jobs per dollar invested than comparable investments in manufacturing or timber harvesting.

The National Trust sponsors several programs geared toward supporting cities, including an ongoing lobbying effort to reinstate rehabilitation tax credits and establish a new credit for homeowners in historic districts. The Trust has also recently inaugurated Community Partners for Revitalization, a program that brings community and economic development services to cities with a commitment to preservation as an effective job creation and livability strategy.

Arts, Culture and Recreation Committee Luncheon, Remarks of Jane Alexander.
While visiting all 50 states during the past year, Jane Alexander, Chairman of the National Endowment for the Arts, had the opportunity to see the fruits of NEA's work at the local level. Singling out the work of the Institute, the Chairman described the efforts of several recent alumni. "Mayor Wilbur Smith of Fort Myers, Florida, attended the Institute in 1990 and returned home a tireless advocate for high quality design. The face of Fort Myers has changed dramatically...in Erie, Pennsylvania, Mayor Joyce Savocchio credits the ideas and suggestions at the Institute as instrumental in her efforts to create a complex of museums and arts-related facilities in a block of historic buildings downtown." In addition, Alexander shared the story of the former and current mayors of Boise, Idaho, Senator Dirk Kempthorne and Mayor Brent Coles—each returned from the Institute to become advocates for quality restoration and sensitive downtown development.

For a copy of Mr. Moe's or Ms. Alexander's remarks, contact the Mayors' Institute at (202) 393-4112.

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approach. While large scale projects often create dramatic results, they can be a drain on time and resources, and the potential risks to the public sector are substantial. Savannah decided to concentrate on a series of smaller, interrelated projects, that, when added together, will significantly improve the downtown's business climate and quality of life.

Mayor Weiner and the SDRA credit much of their success to the city's experience with the Mayors' Institute on City Design. Partnerships are forming between local government and the private sector, and Savannah's citizens and business leaders have been granted the responsibility, authority, and resources to shape the city's future.

For additional information, please contact: Mayor Susan Weiner, PO Box 1027, Savannah, GA 31402, (912) 651-6444 or Peter Armato, Executive Director, SDRA, 104 West Broughton Street, Savannah, GA 31401, (912) 651-6973. ★

PHOTO CREDITS

Page 1 - Broughton Street Renovations, *Savannah Development and Renewal Authority.*

Page 2 - Mayor Susan Weiner at MICD 12 1992, *Dan Grogan Photography, Charlottesville, VA.*

Page 5 - Public Square, *City of Eureka, CA*

CITY DESIGN

The Mayors' Institute on City Design newsletter.

The Mayors' Institute on City Design, sponsored by the Design Program of the National Endowment for the Arts and several schools of architecture across the country, is dedicated to improving the design and livability of America's cities.

To learn more about the work of the Institute or to find out about an upcoming event, please contact Christine Saum, Executive Director, or Steven Schukraft, Program Coordinator, at The Mayors' Institute on City Design, 401 F Street NW, Room 321, Washington, DC 20001 or call (202) 393-4112.

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one—never again will we be dependent on one industry for survival.

As mayors, we have unique tools to facilitate change. We have a platform, a voice. If we inspire our citizens they will embrace our ideas and nurture them. One of the invaluable tools we have is our ability to create and appoint members to committees—Design Review, Arts and Culture, Parks, and of course, Planning. It's imperative that committees work together towards a common vision.

Eureka's new public square and gazebo.

Our Main Street program is among our most successful initiatives. The program helps us celebrate and preserve our historic Victorian architecture and attract new uses to the city center. Our Facade Grant Program has won a Governor's Design Award and has sparked a dramatic facelift in Old Town. Merchants and residents are eager to participate—they are inspired by the program's success.

We have also developed partnerships with the Harbor District, an independent authority long at odds with the city. We are working with the District to build a large, multiuse dock to handle cargo vessels, visiting Navy ships, fishing boats, and our newest industry on the Bay: cruise ships. Access to the waterfront has also been enhanced through the additional of facilities to serve both recreational and commercial users, and we have created places for citizens and visitors to watch and learn more about the working waterfront.

At the Institute I learned about the importance of creating livable, walkable places—a return to the traditions we lost as the automobile became the primary generator of city form. When we design cities to serve the needs of cars, we disenfranchise people; we isolate them between concrete parking lots, making necessary services—neighborhood stores, post offices, laundromats, schools—virtually inaccessible to pedestrians.

In Eureka, we are learning how to make our city work for people, to help them feel connected to the community, to become real stakeholders in the future. Simple design moves—building houses with front porches connected to walkable streets or designing neighborhoods where children and the elderly can walk safely to a corner grocery—can make a dramatic difference in a community's quality of life. There are some things we will no longer tolerate. No more cul-de-sacs, no more pink and green and yellows blobs on a planning map defining how we will live, work, and play. We're learning how to build a real, nurturing, vital community.

As mayors, we have the opportunity to create change that will effect the ways we live in the new millennia. This is a noble cause, and I would like to thank Donlyn Lyndon and his team at the western Institute, and the Design Program of the National Endowment for the Arts for the vision that they have shared with so many mayors. They have decided to save America's cities—one mayor, one city, one section of the country at a time. ★

C A L E N D A R

April 20 - 22, 1995
MICD Northeast: University of MD/Morgan State, Baltimore, MD

April 28 - 30, 1995
MICD XVIII: Charleston, SC

May 11 - 13, 1995
MICD South: Georgia Tech, Atlanta, GA

June 16 - 20, 1995
US Conference for Mayors, Miami, FL

Fremont Street, the birth place of **Las Vegas, NV**'s gambling industry, is undergoing a multimillion dollar face lift. In September, a five block stretch of the street was closed to create a pedestrian-only environment, with cafes, outdoor entertainment, and a nightly light show and sky parade.

The project grew out the discussions following **Mayor Jan Laverty Jones**' (MICD XI 1991) presentation at the Mayors' Institute in 1991. As reported recently in the *New York Times*, "the $63 million project will give new meaning to street's nickname 'Glitter Gulch.'"

★

"You have to give people a place to nurture their spirit," advised Samina Quraeshi, new Director of the National Endowment's Design Program, during her recent visit with city leaders and citizens of **Stockton, CA**. **Mayor Joan Darrah** (MICD XVII 1994) invited Quraeshi to the city to talk about the waterfront development ideas generated at the spring meeting of the Institute in San Antonio. The mayor is forming a task force to explore planning strategies for the waterfront and Weber Point, the site of the city's founding.

★

Mayor Joseph P. Riley Jr. (MICD I 1986), Institute cofounder and consistent source of inspiration for the program, has received yet another award from the professional design community. At the fall meeting of the

American Society of Landscape Architects, Mayor Riley received the LaGasse Medal in recognition of his work to improve the livability and vitality of **Charleston, SC**.

Mayor Riley also recently testified before a Senate Labor and Human Resources subcommittee in support of the National Endowment for the Arts' reauthorization. During the hearing, Mayor Riley spoke of the Institute's impact on cities across America.

★

Mayor Denny Bowman (MICD X 1991) of **Covington, KY**, **Mayor Kay Granger** (MICD XI 1991) of **Fort Worth, TX**, and **Mayor Tomilea Allison** (MICD Midwest 1992) of **Bloomington, IN** participated in the Institute's City Design Seminar for local officials at the National League of Cities' Leadership Training Institute. The Seminar, held prior to the opening of the 1994 Congress of Cities in Minneapolis, was organized around a series of resource presentations and urban design issue work sessions.

Former Institute resource team members Catherine Brown (former coordinator of MICD Midwest), Richard Dagenhart (coordinator of MICD South), Walter Kulash, Mary Means, and Bill Morrish made presentations concerning effective urban design and transportation improvement strategies, and led sessions on design issues pre-sented by the mayors. Over 60 official attended the day-long seminar.

★

Last August, **Mayor Rebecca Smothers** (MICD South 1994) invited a team of design and development specialists to **High Point, NC** to offer advice on the redevelopment of the Sears Block, an issue she presented at the Institute earlier in the summer.

The resource team, organized by MICD South coordinator Richard Dagenhart, included Alan Brangman, David Crane, David Sawicki, Grover Moutoun (former coordinator of MICD South), and Doug Allen. The three day workshop began with a city tours and work sessions. A very well-attended public presentation of ideas and recommendations concluded the workshop.

★

To contribute the acting mayors' unique perspective on urban design, **Mayor Dan Kemmis** (MICD IIX 1990) of **Missoula, MT**, **Mayor Janet Majereus** (MICD Midwest 1992) of **University City, MO**, and **Mayor Nancy Fleming** (MICD West 1990) of Eureka, CA, have served as resource team members or speakers at recent meetings of the Institute.

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